

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed January 19, 2007 has been carefully reviewed and the foregoing amendment has been made in consequence thereof.

Claims 1, 3-7, 9-12, and 25 are now pending in this application. Claims 1, 3-7, and 9-12 stand rejected. Claims 2 and 8 have been canceled. Claims 13-24 have been withdrawn by the Examiner from further consideration. Claim 25 is newly added. No additional fee is due for newly added Claim 25.

Applicants note the Examiner's remarks regarding the "top cover" in Claim 1. Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner is correct in his assumption concerning which reference character in the specification "top cover" refers to.

The rejection of Claims 1, 3, 6, 7, 9, and 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,205,540 to Vona, Jr. et al. (hereinafter referred to as "Vona, Jr. '540") is respectfully traversed.

Vona, Jr. '540 describes a washing machine (10) including an additive dispenser apparatus (60). The washing machine (10) includes a box-like metal cabinet (12) including a top panel (15), a water container (26), and a perforated-wall spin basket (28). The additive dispenser apparatus (60) is coupled to the cabinet (12) using threaded fastening members (not shown) and is positioned under the top panel (15). The dispenser apparatus includes a cup-shaped container (62) that has an interior space (70) for receiving an additive therein. A water inlet tube (114) is coupled in flow communication with the container (62) and a solenoid valve (115) is positioned therebetween. The inlet tube (114) and the solenoid valve (115) introduce water into the container (62). An outlet tube (110) is coupled in flow communication with container (62) and includes a discharge opening (112) for discharging a flow directly into the water container (26). Notably, Vona, Jr. '540 does not describe or suggest an additive dispensing system configured to deliver diluted additive to an annular space defined between a tub and a basket such that the additive is not directly applied to the articles within the basket.

Claim 1 recites an additive dispensing system for a washing machine, the washing machine including a tub for holding wash liquid and a basket for holding articles to be washed, wherein the additive dispensing system comprises “a top cover; a reservoir removably coupled to said top cover; a water valve coupled to said reservoir; an annular space defined between the tub and the basket, said annular space in fluid communication with said reservoir; and a controller coupled to said water valve, said controller configured to control said water valve to introduce water into said reservoir to dilute the additive and initiate delivery of the diluted additive to the washer at a predetermined time during a wash cycle by delivering the diluted additive to said annular space.”

Vona, Jr. ‘540 does not describe or suggest an additive dispensing system, as recited in Claim 1. Specifically, Vona, Jr. ‘540 does not describe or suggest an additive dispensing system configured to deliver diluted additive to an annular space defined between a tub and a basket such that the additive is not directly applied to the articles within the basket. Rather, in contrast to the present invention, Vona, Jr. ‘540 describes an additive dispenser apparatus configured to discharge an additive through an outlet tube directly into a spin basket containing articles to be washed.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit Claim 1 to be patentable over Vona, Jr. ‘540.

Claims 3 and 6 depend from independent Claim 1. When the recitations of Claims 3 and 6 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 3 and 6 likewise are patentable over Vona, Jr. ‘540.

Claim 7 recites a washing machine comprising “a tub for holding wash liquid; a basket for holding articles to be washed; and an additive dispensing system comprising a top cover; a reservoir removably coupled to said top cover; a water valve coupled to said reservoir; an annular space defined between the tub and the basket, said annular space in fluid communication with said reservoir; and a controller coupled to said water valve, said controller configured to control said water valve to introduce water into said reservoir to

dilute an additive and initiate delivery of the diluted additive to the washer at a predetermined time during a wash cycle by delivering the diluted additive to said annular space.”

Vona, Jr. ‘540 does not describe or suggest a washing machine, as recited in Claim 7. Specifically, Vona, Jr. ‘540 does not describe or suggest a washing machine comprising an additive dispensing system configured to deliver diluted additive to an annular space defined between a tub and a basket such that the additive is not directly applied to the articles within the basket. Rather, in contrast to the present invention, Vona, Jr. ‘540 describes an additive dispenser apparatus configured to discharge additive through an outlet tube directly into a spin basket containing articles to be washed.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit Claim 7 to be patentable over Vona, Jr. ‘540.

Claims 9 and 12 depend from independent Claim 7. When the recitations of Claims 9 and 12 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 7, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 9 and 12 likewise are patentable over Vona, Jr. ‘540.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 102 rejection of Claims 1, 3, 6, 7, 9, and 12 be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claims 1, 3, 5-7, 9, 11, and 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,160,367 to Vona, Jr. et al. (hereinafter referred to as “Vona, Jr. ‘367”) is respectfully traversed.

Vona, Jr. ‘367 describes a washing machine (10) including an additive dispenser apparatus (60). The washing machine (10) includes a box-like metal cabinet (12) including a top panel (15), a water container (26), and a perforated-wall spin basket (28). The additive dispenser apparatus (60) is coupled to the cabinet (12) using threaded fastening members (not shown) and is positioned under the top panel (15). The dispenser apparatus includes a pour-in container (62) that is coupled in flow communication to a storage container (70). The storage container (70) includes an outlet stem (120) to facilitate draining of the non-diluted contents of the storage container (70). Specifically, stem (120) is coupled to a liquid additive

conduit (126) which is coupled in flow communication with the water container (26) via a drain sump (47). A solenoid (150) enables draining of the non-diluted contents of storage container (70) into conduit (126). Notably, Vona, Jr. '367 does not describe or suggest an additive dispensing system configured to deliver diluted additive to an annular space positioned between a tub and a basket such that the additive is not directly applied to the articles within the basket.

Claim 1 recites an additive dispensing system for a washing machine, the washing machine including a tub for holding wash liquid and a basket for holding articles to be washed, wherein the additive dispensing system comprises "a top cover; a reservoir removably coupled to said top cover; a water valve coupled to said reservoir; an annular space defined between the tub and the basket, said annular space in fluid communication with said reservoir; and a controller coupled to said water valve, said controller configured to control said water valve to introduce water into said reservoir to dilute the additive and initiate delivery of the diluted additive to the washer at a predetermined time during a wash cycle by delivering the diluted additive to said annular space."

Vona, Jr. '367 does not describe or suggest an additive dispensing system, as recited in Claim 1. Specifically, Vona, Jr. '367 does not describe or suggest an additive dispensing system configured to deliver diluted additive to an annular space defined between a tub and a basket such that the additive is not directly applied to the articles within the basket. Rather, in contrast to the present invention, Vona, Jr. '367 describes an additive dispenser apparatus configured to discharge non-diluted additive through a drain sump to a water container.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit Claim 1 to be patentable over Vona, Jr. '367.

Claims 3, 5, and 6 depend from independent Claim 1. When the recitations of Claims 3, 5, and 6 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 3, 5, and 6 likewise are patentable over Vona, Jr. '367.

Claim 7 recites a washing machine comprising “a tub for holding wash liquid; a basket for holding articles to be washed; and an additive dispensing system comprising a top cover; a reservoir removably coupled to said top cover; a water valve coupled to said reservoir; an annular space defined between the tub and the basket, said annular space in fluid communication with said reservoir; and a controller coupled to said water valve, said controller configured to control said water valve to introduce water into said reservoir to dilute an additive and initiate delivery of the diluted additive to the washer at a predetermined time during a wash cycle by delivering the diluted additive to said annular space.”

Vona, Jr. ‘367 does not describe or suggest a washing machine, as recited in Claim 7. Specifically, Vona, Jr. ‘367 does not describe or suggest a washing machine comprising an additive dispensing system configured to deliver diluted additive to an annular space defined between a tub and a basket such that the additive is not directly applied to the articles within the basket. Rather, in contrast to the present invention, Vona, Jr. ‘367 describes an additive dispenser apparatus configured to discharge non-diluted additive through a drain sump to a water container.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit Claim 7 to be patentable over Vona, Jr. ‘367.

Claims 9, 11, and 12 depend from independent Claim 7. When the recitations of Claims 9, 11, and 12 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 7, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 9, 11, and 12 likewise are patentable over Vona, Jr. ‘367.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 102 rejection of Claims 1, 3, 5-7, 9, 11, and 12 be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claims 1, 3-7, and 9-12 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Japanese Application Publication No.: 08-206390 to Morimasa et al. (hereinafter referred to as “Morimasa”) is respectfully traversed.

Morimasa describes an automatic washing machine that includes a tank (1) having a tub (2) and a rotation tub (4). The rotation tub (4) includes a basket (7) coupled therein. The washing machine also includes a top cover (18) and a control panel (21) coupled thereto. A detergent injection system is coupled to the top cover (18) such that the detergent injection system (22) is positioned directly above basket (7). The detergent injection system (22) includes an irrigation case (23) and a reservoir unit (26) coupled therein. The reservoir unit (26) includes a detergent reservoir container (43) and a finishing agent reservoir container (44). The finishing agent container (44) includes a siphon path formed by a pair of bodies (59 and 60), wherein the siphon path is coupled in flow communication with rotation tub (4). A water source (not shown) is coupled to a feed valve (31) which is coupled in flow communication to the reservoir unit (26), wherein the valve (31) directs water to both the detergent container (43) and the finishing agent container (44) during the wash cycle. The water mixes with the finishing agent and is siphoned directly into the basket (7). Notably, Morimasa does not describe or suggest an additive dispensing system configured to deliver diluted additive to an annular space defined between a tub and a basket such that the additive is not directly applied to the articles within the basket.

Claim 1 recites an additive dispensing system for a washing machine, the washing machine including a tub for holding wash liquid and a basket for holding articles to be washed, wherein the additive dispensing system comprises “a top cover; a reservoir removably coupled to said top cover; a water valve coupled to said reservoir; an annular space defined between the tub and the basket, said annular space in fluid communication with said reservoir; and a controller coupled to said water valve, said controller configured to control said water valve to introduce water into said reservoir to dilute the additive and initiate delivery of the diluted additive to the washer at a predetermined time during a wash cycle by delivering the diluted additive to said annular space.”

Morimasa does not describe or suggest an additive dispensing system, as recited in Claim 1. Specifically, Morimasa does not describe or suggest an additive dispensing system configured to deliver diluted additive to an annular space defined between a tub and a basket such that the additive is not directly applied to the articles within the basket. Rather, in

contrast to the present invention, Morimasa describes a detergent injection system positioned directly above a basket, where in the system is configured to discharge a diluted additive directly into the basket.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit Claim 1 to be patentable over Morimasa.

Claims 3-6 depend from independent Claim 1. When the recitations of Claims 3-6 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 3-6 likewise are patentable over Morimasa.

Claim 7 recites a washing machine comprising “a tub for holding wash liquid; a basket for holding articles to be washed; and an additive dispensing system comprising a top cover; a reservoir removably coupled to said top cover; a water valve coupled to said reservoir; an annular space defined between the tub and the basket, said annular space in fluid communication with said reservoir; and a controller coupled to said water valve, said controller configured to control said water valve to introduce water into said reservoir to dilute an additive and initiate delivery of the diluted additive to the washer at a predetermined time during a wash cycle by delivering the diluted additive to said annular space.”

Morimasa does not describe or suggest a washing machine, as recited in Claim 7. Specifically, Morimasa does not describe or suggest a washing machine comprising an additive dispensing system configured to deliver diluted additive to an annular space defined between a tub and a basket such that the additive is not directly applied to the articles within the basket. Rather, in contrast to the present invention, Morimasa describes a detergent injection system positioned directly above a basket, where in the system is configured to discharge a diluted additive directly into the basket.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit Claim 7 to be patentable over Morimasa.

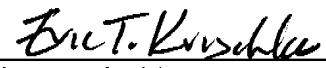
Claims 9-12 depend from independent Claim 7. When the recitations of Claims 9-12 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 7, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 9-12 likewise are patentable over Morimasa.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 102 rejection of Claims 1, 3-7, and 9-12 be withdrawn.

With respect to newly added Claim 25, Applicants respectfully submit that none of the cited art describes a washing machine including a dispensing system comprising a reservoir that is removably coupled to a top cover such that the reservoir is configured to snap into the top cover. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 25 is patentable over the cited art.

In view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, all the claims now active in this application are believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and favorable action is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,


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